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CLASSIFICATION

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

INFORMATION REPORT

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REPORT

CD NO.

COUNTRY Germany (Russian Zone)

DATE INFO April 1950

SUBJECT Production of Rhenium in the DDR

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1. Rhenium, a metal with a high melting point, is found in Mansfeld copper ores. When these ores are smelted, a residue of metals with a high melting point, such as rhenium and ruthenium, accumulates at the bottom of the blast furnaces. Before World War II, the residues were allowed to accumulate in blocks, and when the furnaces were burned out or torn down, the residue metals were extracted from the blocks.
2. Mansfeld copper ores are smelted in the blast furnaces of the Kropfmühle (Eisleben) and the Kochmühle (Hettstedt), both of which belong to the Kombinat Wilhelm Pieck. Unspecified amounts of rhenium are extracted at the Kupferhammermühle (Hettstedt). A chemical process by which rhenium can be obtained was developed before World War II by a chemist in Aschersleben in about 1950, Ing. (nu) Lindemann of the central laboratory of the Kombinat Wilhelm Pieck took over the research and the production of rhenium was started. Production has remained on a small scale.
3. So far, the rhenium which has been produced has not been drawn into wire. An unspecified amount of rhenium oxide was delivered to the porcelain industry. Engineers of the Kupferhammermühle have considered alloying rhenium and platinum and making crucibles from the alloy, but this has not yet been done. The possibility of using rhenium as an anti-corrosion agent in electrolysis has also been discussed but as yet no action has been taken on this idea. All rhenium produced thus far, except what delivered to the porcelain industry, is stored in the vaults of the Deutsche Notenbank. The bank has declared rhenium a precious metal and fixed its price at 15.00 DM per gram.

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